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SUBJECT: BASRAH LEADERS DECLARE A "STATE OF PEACE" FOR THE WORLD CUP

¶1. Summary. On June 8, the Regional Embassy Office (REO) organized an event at the Basrah Business Center (BBC) for the political, religious and tribal leaders of Basrah to publicly sign a declaration of peace for the period of the 2006 World Cup in Germany, June 9 - July 9. The event also included a speech by the Basrah Governor and the distribution of soccer paraphernalia to 30 children representing the Shia, Sunni and Christian communities in Basrah. The event was well attended by 67 leaders and extensively covered by over 30 local and international media representatives. End Summary.

¶2. Attendees at the event included Basrah Governor Mohamed Al Wai'li (Fadhilla) Provincial Council (PC) Chairman Mohamed Obadi (Dawaa), PC members Sayed Bahaa Jamal Al Deen (Independent), Aqeel Talib (Fadhilla) and Munathil Abd Khanjar (Basrah Islamic List). Prominent religious leaders present included Sheik Mohamed Al Mutori, Head of the Shia Endowment, Sunni leader Sheik Khalid Al Mulla and Archbishop Gabriel Kassab. Tribal leaders were represented by Sheik Kadim Al Gatrani, Head of Basrah Tribal Council (Shia), Sheik Adnan Al Ghanim, Head of Tribal Coalition (Sunni). All these individuals and others signed the 3 ft. by 4 ft. document that proclaimed a month of peace during the World Cup so that the children and youth of Basrah may enjoy the games without the fear of violence.

¶3. The event was marked by a speech from the Governor and the distribution of soccer gifts to the children donated by British soccer star, David Beckham and the Real Madrid Football Club. In addition, during the event the news was received that Al Zargawi had been killed. The announcement of this news by the Governor resulted in a loud cheer from the crowd of Basrah notables.

¶4. Comment: The event showed that the political, religious and tribal leaders of Basrah can gather together under one roof for an event that celebrates sports and children. More importantly, in a little over a week since the Prime Minister declared a "State of Emergency" in Basrah, the leaders of this city seemed genuinely grateful and animated that they had all been brought together to publicly sign a declaration of a "State of Peace" for the World Cup. End Comment.

MARRANO